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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

ACTION OF ALCOHOL ON MUSCLES.—An experiment to test the influence of alcohol on muscular work has been reported in a Danish medical journal. 5 c. c. of alcohol was given before rising and the test made fifty minutes later. Control solutions were used, so the person under observation did not know when he was taking alcohol. Certain prescribed movements were done with the eyes alternately open and shut. There was always a falling off of from thirty to fifty per cent in steadiness of the muscles when alcohol had been taken.

PROPHYLAXIS OF DIPHTHERIA.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association* mentions that diphtheria, which had long been endemic at Mendoza, has been brought under control by systematic use of a vaccine to immunize all in the environment of every case of diphtheria. This seems to confer a more lasting immunity than with the use of antitoxin and appears to be free from the drawbacks of the latter.

BREATH-HOLDING ATTACKS.—In a discussion in the American Pediatric Society it was stated that breath holding usually occurs in neuropathic children and treatment should be directed toward the general management of the nervous child. Biting of the tongue, a symptom of epilepsy, does not occur in breath holding. The patient should be shown in no uncertain manner that a repetition of the attack will end with harsh if not painful measures. A case was mentioned in which a child who had a cold became unconscious during an attack and died. It was suggested that forcing the mouth open, drawing the tongue forward and then pushing the cheeks in, excited some reflex which relieved the spasm of the glottis. These cases do not occur until the second year of life.

VITALIZATION OF ARTIFICIAL LIMBS.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association* says that an Italian surgeon advocates the principle of direct muscular control of the movements of artificial limbs by the muscles in the stump. He has devised fifty-one different ways in which the principle can be applied, including the utilizing of antagonist muscles.

DRIED MILK.—A report on the value of dried milk has been issued in Great Britain. There are two methods of preparing it. In one the milk is passed over heated cylinders and the film thus formed is scraped off. The other is the process of spraying a previously concentrated milk into a hot air chamber where the dried milk falls in

the form of a cream colored powder. If kept dry it will remain fresh for weeks or months. When mixed with water in the proportion of one dram to one ounce it corresponds in composition to ordinary milk. It has a somewhat boiled taste, the fat rises quickly to the surface and there is generally some undissolved residue. It has proved, however, a good substitute for cow's milk, much better than the proprietary foods, which contain much starch. It is said to contain far fewer germs than town milk and is less likely to transmit infectious diseases. Germs do not multiply in it. It should be prepared as it is needed for feeding, as it does not keep well.

SUBSTITUTE FOR CATHETERIZATION.—In the discussions of the American Medical Association it was stated that half an ounce of sterile glycerin introduced into the bladder did away with the use of the catheter.

FACTORS IN BREAST NURSING.—An Italian physician asserts that few women are actually incapable of nursing their children and that medical advice and assistance during the first week after childbirth materially increase the number of women who can do so. She thinks that milk stations to supply milk for infants are not as much needed as consultations and advice as to the care of children in the home. Distribution of milk, trains the mothers to artificial feeding for their infants.

FIBROID TUMORS AND RADIUM.—Dr. Howard A. Kelly, of Baltimore, approves of the use of radium in fibroid tumors; it is without danger and has been found effective in 93 per cent of the cases under observation, numbering 210. In 171, radium alone was sufficient to relieve the patient. The tumor was either gone, or markedly diminished, or the patient symptomatically well. If radium fails, the operation has only been postponed without detriment to the patient. In some cases, even after two years, menstruation either normal or scanty has returned.

MUSTARD GAS.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association* says that this poisonous substance now employed by the Germans in warfare was first made in 1886 by a German chemist, Victor Meyer. It is in reality a heavy, oily fluid, sinking below water and not miscible with it, of neutral reaction, having a faint sweetish, ethereal odor only slightly suggestive of the sulphur compounds, and with a boiling point of 217 C. It can be distributed in the form of a spray on impact of a shell. The conspicuous symptoms are conjunctivitis, laryngitis, bronchitis and skin burns, all due to the excoriating effect of the substance. Many complications may ensue. The appearance of the symptoms is usually delayed for a considerable time, sometimes

as long as sixteen hours. The lesion is a chemical burn, unlike those produced by heat, electricity, or the ordinary corrosives, such as acids or strong alkalis. The deep penetration of the smallest quantities applied to the surface is a most striking feature. The height of the necrosis is not reached until from five to ten days after the application. The painlessness of the lesion is a marked characteristic.

GERMANY A CANCER IN THE BODY POLITIC.—Major Edouard Rist, who came direct from the French front to address the American Medical Association, said in the course of his speech: "Germany has sacrificed everything to the delusion of growth and for the sake of growth. Now this malignant growth has shown itself in its true light—a cancer which separates the normal cells from each other, which obliterates blood vessels and destroys and kills. There is only one remedy for this growth, the knife. It is applied now. The surgical team doing the work is the best the world can afford. Great Britain, France, Italy and America are at it. Let them do the work thoroughly, so that there shall be no recurrence. Let them extirpate this malignant tumor, this poisonous German growth, lest it should infect the whole body. It is hard work, it will be long work and it is ugly work, but it has to be done if the world is to be saved and freedom restored."

BALANCE BETWEEN FOOD, FUEL AND WORK.—A British scientific commission has reported that if the workman be under-nourished he may, by grit and pluck, continue his labor for a certain time, but in the end his work is sure to fail. It makes no difference what the nutritive condition of the person is, if a certain job requiring muscular effort is to be done it always needs a definite amount of extra food to do it. Has not this a special application to nurses?

WAR AGAINST HOOKWORM.—At the request of the Government, the Rockefeller Institute is sending an expedition to Jamaica, British West Indies, to institute work towards the eradication of hookworm. The work will be undertaken in coöperation with the Government.

"Kindness is catching, and if you go round with a thoroughly developed case, your neighbors will be sure to get it."